1;Griffiths M-5. (ca. 1940) 1946 AW37 Kol AW37

361 boundaries. Such boundaries exist in theory, but are not always
[196] marked out. The religious ceremonies which are supposed to take them into account just go round the outskirts of the village, paying no particular attention to supposed boundary points.

363 The ordinary Kol village is not a pretentious affair. There will be one or two central paths, three to ten feet wide and up to 300 yards long, which are the main streets and which the houses face. If the terrain permits, these paths usually run in a northerly-southerly
[364] direction and are often winding. Between the houses there are little lanes through which one may squeeze to get to the back of the village
[342] where the trash is thrown. The houses are made of *chatai* walls plastered with mud, or possibly of thick mud walls. The roof is usually of grass, but cheap country tiles are frequently employed. A two-storied house is unknown except in the larger towns where brick is used and some wealthy person resides. There is no street in the ordinary sense of the word and the lanes which provide the outlets for the
361 various houses are narrow, dirty and tortuous. The individual group may have two small buildings, one of which houses the cattle, though
[343] it is not unusual to find the cattle kept on the veranda. It is from
231 such a village that the labourers go out to their fields which not in-
[241] frequently lie from two to three miles distant from the village. On the edge of most villages are seen a few meaner huts grouped together
621 and in these one usually finds the depressed and the untouchables.
564 The fact is at once known by the pigs which are all about such houses.
735 Where Kols do not have their own village and are attached to some larger village or hamlet the two groups usually live on the edge; but the Kol, generally speaking, is more cleanly than the lower groups whose houses occasionally adjoin his dwelling place. When questioned why they live apart the answer has usually taken a three-fold form:
[262] It is claimed first that Hindus do not like to have Kols living near them because they (the Kols) eat meat and especially pork, which is consumed at the time of sacrifice. The next reason is an economic one: Kols are too poor to rent lands or pay the house rent required in the
[127] villages. One rupee a year is the maximum paid outside the village and sometimes nothing is required save a bit of help to the *malguzar* or landlord when he needs labourers in his fields. Kols also claim that if they live in close proximity to the higher castes they would not be free to sing and play the drum the whole night through, a thing which they consider necessary at certain times of worship.

184 LIVING CONDITIONS. There is a good deal of variation in the
342 conditions under which the Kols live. In places where tenancy is
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184 side are the few poor possessions of the inmates. The clothes are
343 nearly always on their bodies, and one finds only a few rags, some
[422] cooking utensils, and the like. The floor is damp and poorly plastered.
[735] At Kymore we saw a few houses that even a dog would not consider worthy of entering, which sheltered families. One wonders how in the heat and the rain and the cold a human being can live in such places.

A number of the better grade houses have two rooms. These houses have some veranda space, and here are examples of outside measurements of some of the better types:

26′×7′; 35′×18′; 40′×20′; 39′×23′;
12′×16′; 15′×16′; 15′×12′; 10′×15′.

In one of the above houses that had two rooms one measured 10′×3′ and the other 10′×15′ In these better houses the height of the mud wall is six to seven feet above the level of the floor. Some of the meaner huts measured 5′×10′ and 6′×12′, with walls about three
[592] feet high. In one of these measuring 6′×12′ we found five people living, in another of a similar size four. At Kymore the huts were about seven feet long and three feet wide.

See figures 2 and 3 showing diagrams of typical Kol houses.

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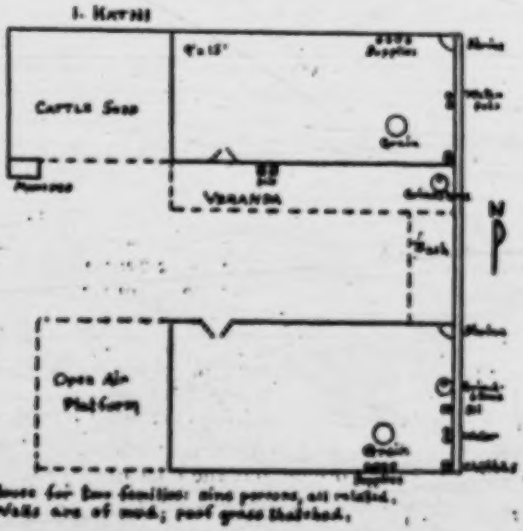
GROUND PLANS OF KOL HOUSES



House for two families: nine persons, all related.
Walls are of mud; roof grass thatched.

Fig. 2.

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or quilt which they make from their own worn-out clothes or even from the cast-off clothes of others. These quilts and mattresses are used in place of blankets and other forms of bedding usually found in villages, and present a ragged sight when taken out in the sun to air. The Rautiya Kols have a taboo for the Kathariya mattress. Rautiya Kols generally despise this *kurhi* because they do menial work, but this cannot be the main reason.

All the evidence that we were able to collect indicates that Russell and Hiralal are incorrect in their conclusions regarding the Kathariyas having the mattress as their totem. They say: "A member of this sept (Katharia) must never have a mattress in his house nor wear clothes sewn in cross-pieces as mattresses are sewn. The word *kathri* should never be mentioned before him as he thinks some great misfortune would thereby happen to his family, but this belief is falling into abeyance."[1] The actual facts which we have carefully checked seem to be the exact opposite.

8. *Khairwar.* This is probably the same as a group in Chota Nagpur known under the slightly different name of Kharias. In the year 1937 Sarat Chandra Roy[2] published in two volumes a complete and comprehensive study of this important group. The Khairwars in the Central Provinces seem to be a mixture of jungle tribes and are often confused with the Gonds. Russell and Hiralal say that the most probable derivation of the name is from the *khair* or catechu tree (*Acacia catechu*) from which catechu, "any one of the several dry, earthy, or resinlike, astringent substances got from certain tropical plants and used in tanning and dyeing" is manufactured. We were given this same information: this group is called Khairwars because its members make *khair*. They are also said to be a low type of Kol and this work is despised as a profession for now-a-days it is done only by primitive jungle dwellers. It is not unlikely that a group of Kols at one time were active in preparing *khair* and so received this name, but it is more probable that they are somehow related to the Kharias of Chota Nagpur.

9. *Kulmangan.* This is another of the so-called lower types of Kols, the name being derived from *mangna*, "to ask." It appears that during the time of birth, marriage, death, or special religious functions, members of this *kurhi*, if such it may be called, make it a practice to ask alms from Kols. On certain occasions they are said to play the *sarangi*—a one-stringed musical instrument. There is no

1 Russell and Hiralal, *Op. Cit.*, Vol. III. p. 510, see also Vol. I, p. 91.
2 *The Kharias.*

1:Griffiths M-5 (ca. 1940) 1946 AW37 Kol AW37

say there is nothing one does in relation to it. The moon is thought of as feminine and the sun as masculine, for the moon is cold and the sun is hot. There are a number of beliefs and superstitions concerning the moon. It is good luck to see the new moon before any stars are out in the sky. On seeing the new moon for the first time a Kol may either tear a corner off one of his garments and cast it toward the moon, or may hold up the garment toward the moon, saying: "Take these old clothes and give me new ones." It is usual at the same time to take worn-out pieces of cloth or just rags, and hang them on the tree near the house. This attracts the goddess of torn clothes, Chithra *devi*, who will bring good luck and in the course of time new garments.

The moon is thought to have no evil influences upon men folk and therefore is not feared by them. Women, however, are likely to be affected by the moon and as far as possible should avoid it. Pregnant women especially should not expose themselves to the moon as it is liable to cause a miscarriage or a deformed infant.

The time of an eclipse of either the sun or the moon is a time of special precaution and worship. The Kols say that the sun is devoured by a giant whom they call Dhrubh. The concept that a demon devours the sun is common all over India, but the usual Hindu concept is that it is swallowed by one named Rahu, the "looser or seizer." The Kol story goes that both the sun and the moon at one time borrowed something from Dhrubh, whom Kols call the brother of Indra. This debt must be repaid, and if at any time the sun or the moon is not able to pay on the debt, it is attacked by Dhrubh who begins to devour it. He never quite does so, however and vomits it up, as there is still money owing and payments must go on. Others say that Dhrubh is merely jealous of the moon because she is worshipped and adored while he is not. Therefore he attacks either the sun or the moon. One should bathe at the time of an eclipse. During such a time women should remain inside for it is a very dangerous season especially if they are with child. The men may go out to bathe, sing and beat the drums. Wicked spirits are abroad, and unless the women are protected by charms, they are liable to be attacked. After the release of the sun or moon, the women go out to bathe. The Nerbudda is the best place in Central India, but any tank or river will do if one cannot go so far. After bathing they should give some alms to Basors who will be waiting near by. They give to no others.

At home no food is prepared or eaten during the eclipse. Nothing cooked is left in the house, and all uncooked food should be carefully protected so as not to become a prey to the evil spirits. All the earthen vessels used in connection with food and water should be thrown out

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426 under village conditions. Almost every time we were in the Kol
369 sections in and close to Jubbulpore we met Pathan money-lenders
who were there to collect what they could of interest due to them. It
[178] appears that as Kols come into close contact with city life, their natural
hesitation to acquire a debt is broken down, and money is taken as a
loan which they have practically no expectation of being able
to repay.

426 It should also not be overlooked that in some sections there is a
state of perpetual debt on the part of the Kol villager. Money is not
exactly borrowed—it is rather a gift which cannot be paid back, but
which means a life-long obligation of service to the giver. This is
particularly true of conditions in Rewa State and the more backward
parts of the Central Provinces.

525 GAMBLING AND BEGGING. Some enquiries were also made
[623] concerning gambling. The *panchayat* allows it on certain festival
days such as *Dewali* when all groups gamble, and also it is allowed
occasionally in private. The gambling is not for large stakes and
most communities seem to avoid it. At present the most popular
form of gambling found mostly near cities is said to be with the use
of playing cards. Under village conditions a block of wood is taken
and on the six sides numbers are marked. These blocks are thrown
somewhat in the manner of dice. Coins are also thrown, singly and
in combination.

● 735 There are not many beggars among the Kols and we came across
nothing of this type although the Census Report indicated that some
were returned as "beggars, vagrants and prostitutes". When we made
our enquiries they indicated that they felt a responsibility for those of
their own group who were in need, and that they tried to care for such
during the period of their dependency.

474 We did not find that they made use of co-operative societies, although
184 in the case of Barela, there was one which they might have used. As
665 far as we were able to observe no active interest was taken in politics,
and none of the village Kols reported as ever having cast a ballot. It
is otherwise with the Kols in Jubbulpore, for the Congress party has
been very active and all who have been eligible have been recorded
under its banner.

571 From many enquiries it is clear that among themselves, apart
575 from the *panchayat*, they have no clubs nor associations of any
kind.

181 From the above survey of the economic conditions existing among
735 the Kols it will have been seen that they are among the poor and dis-

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possessed of the land. As a group they rank toward the bottom of the economic level; and in spite of their being such good workers it appears that there is but little chance for them to earn, in even a moderate way, enough to lift themselves from the pit in which they rest. Their burdens are many and their ignorance is great. And yet they do not worry much; and they have a saying to the effect that, "when there is food in the house why should one go out and labour?"